

send. Now it was in September 1791, that Louis XVI. accepted the new constitution: and from this time to the time of his deposition he had done no one act, which warranted the National Assembly (according to the constitution, which *they* likewise had sworn to defend) to take so severe a measure. If Mr. Besham will take the trouble to examine Ch. II. Sect. I. Art. 4, 5, 6, of the constitution of 1791, he will find three cases particularly specified; in which, and in which *alone*, this constitution declared the throne vacant: first, if the King refused to take the oath; secondly, if he placed himself at the head of a foreign army, destined to act against France; thirdly, if he quitted the kingdom. But Louis XVI. had been guilty of none of these offences. That he had taken the oath, Mr. B. himself admits; and every one knows, that he neither put himself at the head of a foreign army, nor that he quitted the kingdom. He did not even *attempt* to quit the kingdom, after he had accepted the constitution; and sophistry itself will hardly venture to quote the attempt,

tempt, which he made, *before* he accepted the constitution, unless it can be proved, that a man is bound by a contract before he has made it. Not Louis XVI. therefore, but the members of the National Assembly were traitors to the constitution, which they had sworn to defend.

Further, Mr. Belsham, taking for granted, that the recall of Lord Gower was a direct interference in the internal affairs of France, quotes a passage* from my History, in which I had represented even the old government of France as having acted insincerely toward England, and then asks with great triumph (p. 19) " If all this be true, " why incur any political risques in opposing the downfall of a government, which " had shewn itself thus uniformly treacherous and hostile?"—To this I answer, with great submission, that we did *not* oppose the downfall of the old French government: we remained perfectly neutral, as the

* This passage, however, as is Mr. Belsham's method, is quoted very imperfectly. But on Mr. B's method of quoting, more will be said hereafter.

National Convention itself testified* so late as Jan. 13, 1793: nor did we interfere, as Spain did, in behalf of Louis XVI., even when that unfortunate monarch was brought, as a criminal, to the bar of the National Convention. Surely it was enough to be silent on that melancholy occasion: it would have been too much, to expect us to applaud.

"The National Assembly (continues Mr. B.) had taken every opportunity of courting the favour and friendship of the British nation."—That they courted or pretended to court the British nation, while they took every opportunity of insulting the British government, is certainly true. We need only recollect the answers of the National Convention to the certain British societies,† and the circular letter of Monge, in which the French minister promises, that they will speedily fly into the arms of their brother

* See the History of the Politics, &c. Ch. IV., Note 13.

† Ob. Ch. X. Notes 19, 20, 21.

As it is a favourite position of Mr. Bcl-
 sham, that the recall of Lord Gower was an
 interference in the internal affairs of France,
 he quotes a passage (p. 21) from a speech
 of Brissot, in which this celebrated sophist
 declares, that it was. But it will certainly,
 be allowed, that Le Brun, who was at that
 time the French minister for foreign affairs,
 is at least as good authority on this subject,
 as Brissot: and Le Brun signified to Lord
 Gower himself, that he did not consider the
 behaviour of the British cabinet on that oc-
 casion, as an interference in the affairs of
 France.* He said likewise, in his Report
 to the National Assembly, a few days after
 Lord Gower quitted Paris, that the British

* Le Brun in his Note to Lord Gower, (just before
 his Lordship quitted Paris) speaking of the assurances
 of neutrality, with which the recall of the British am-
 bassador was accompanied, said, " This assurance ap-
 pears to be the result of the attention, wisely reflected
 on, and solemnly expressed by his Britannic Majesty,
 not to interfere in the interior arrangement of the af-
 fairs of France." See the original quoted in the Hist.
 of the Politics, &c. Ch. IX. Note 2.

ambassador

ambassador " had left a *satisfactory testimony of the sentiments of his court.*"* Le Brun declared further, in his Letter to Lord Gower, not only that the French nation confided " in the justice, the moderation, and the impartiality of the British cabinet," but likewise that " this confidence was founded on facts."† Yet Mr. Belsham, in defiance of Le Brun, has ventured (p. 25) to accuse the British cabinet " of an hollow neutrality of words, contradicted by her own public act." If Mr. B. objects to the testimony of Le Brun, yet he will hardly deny a well authenticated fact, that the British cabinet, about the time of Lord Gower's recall, again was solicited to join the coalition, and again refused.‡ Its assurances of neutrality therefore were confirmed, not contradicted, by its actions.

But, if the British government intended to remain neutral, why (exclaims Mr. Belsham, p. 23) did Lord Gower depart at all?

* Ch. IX. Note 12.

† *Ib.* Note 11.

‡ *Ib.* Note 13.

The answer to this question he will find at full length in Chap. IX. of my History ; and therefore it is unnecessary to reply to it again. But " Baron Blohm, the Danish ambassador at Paris in August 1792 (says " Mr. B. p. 107) did not immediately retire " from the French territory in consequence " of the events of that month." True ; he did not retire *immediately*, and I told Mr. Belsham so in Ch. IX. I told him likewise the reason, namely, that Baron Blohm was too ill at that time to leave Paris immediately : for he actually received letters of recall from the Court of Denmark, as I related very distinctly, though Mr. Belsham has thought proper to suppress this material circumstance, and thus to let his readers imagine, that the Danish ambassador was *not* recalled.

Lastly, Mr. Belsham (p. 22) represents as highly meritorious the conduct of the new French government, in permitting Mr. Chauvelin to remain in London, after Lord Gower was recalled from Paris.—But Mr. Chauvelin actually was recalled : his letters
of

of recall were brought over to him by Mr. Noel, afterwards ambassador at the Hague : and Mr. Chauvelin procured a revocation of the order by using the following argument : " That though he was not well with the English Minister, yet he was perfectly so with Mr. Fox and some other members of opposition, and that it would not be prudent in France, *to lose the fruits of his labours with these gentlemen and their subsequent services, for a vain form of diplomatic etiquette.*" Of this fact, which is very well authenticated, Mr. B. could not have been ignorant, because I have quoted it twice in the course of my History :* and therefore, if he had been wise, he would have said nothing about the *merit* of the French government on this occasion.

CHAPTER X.

Mr. Belsham has made only *one* formal objection to any thing which I have advanced

* Ch. XIII, Note 34, and again at the end of Ch. XVI.

in

in this chapter, though it is replete with facts and documents, which very clearly demonstrate, that the French were the aggressors in the present war. But he has made two observations, which relate to the same period with this chapter, and which require a little correction. These shall be considered first.

After having admitted (p. 26) that the leading orators of the Convention intimated and even asserted, "that, in case of a war, it would be easy to excite a formidable insurrection in England, which would probably terminate in the subversion of kingly government," he adds, "How far Mr. Brissot and other popular orators in the Convention who used this language, credited these extravagancies themselves does not appear." But if Mr. Belsham will take the trouble to read Ch. X. once more, and to read it with attention, he will find, that the matter appears very clearly. However, not to give him too much trouble, I will here repeat *one* of the reasons for believing that Le Brun, Brissot, and many other leading

leading men in France, really *did* give credit to such extravagancies. Mr. Miles, namely, who was well acquainted with the views of the leading men at that time in France, has repeatedly asserted what Mr. B. affects to doubt, and in one place has made the following solemn declaration on this very subject.

*"Such, I aver on the faith of an honest man, were the delusive hopes entertained by Le Brun and many others, who, unfortunately for both nations, had more power and influence at that moment, than sense and discretion."** The whole conduct of the French rulers toward England confirmed this declaration.

But, says Mr. Belsham (p. 26), "there exists no evidence of their entertaining any agents in England, with a view to excite public disturbances." I beg leave therefore to recommend it to Mr. Belsham, once more to read ch. x. of my history, where he will find very satisfactory evidence

* This declaration I quoted toward the close of chap. x. from the Authentic Correspondence, p. 28.

on this subject. Not to tire the reader's patience with too many repetitions of what has been already related in that work, I will quote at present only the following passage from Mr. Miles's Letter to Le Brun, dated Jan. 2, 1793. "*Recall then all your emissaries : put an end to the propaganda : and no longer strive to disturb the public tranquillity in this country.*"* Surely Mr. Miles would not have written in this manner to Le Brun, who was both French Minister for foreign affairs, and his intimate friend, unless French emissaries had been actually sent by the French government, to excite disturbances in England. But if Mr. Belfham is not satisfied with the testimony of Mr. Miles, he will certainly not reject the evidence of Brissot, who made no scruple of admitting that French emissaries actually were employed, and even that they were furnished with immense sums for the purpose in question.†

* See more of this letter, which is quoted in ch. x. note 48. in the original French.

† See the passages quoted from Brissot in ch. x. notes 38-42.

I come now to Mr. Belsham's objection, which I have deferred for no other reason, than because he has made it a little further on in his pamphlet, where the subject does not immediately relate to ch. x.—In this chapter, after having proved, by authentic documents, the *fact*, that the French government was concerned in a plot to overthrow the British government in December, 1792, I quoted several remarkable *circumstances* of this plot from a French work,* the author of which appeared to be well acquainted with the subject. But, as I did not know who the author was, and therefore could not be certain that he was perfectly accurate, though many of the circumstances which he has related, were confidently reported in London at the very time, I told my readers very fairly, that I did not require implicit credit to be given to those *circumstances*, and said expressly in note 36, that "I did not quote them as *absolutely certain*,

* It is printed in the *Collection des Meilleurs Ouvrages, qui ont été publiés pour la défense de Louis xvi.* Paris, 1793, 2 tom. 8vo.

"because they were not taken from an *official* document." Nor did I ever make use of them in the subsequent part of the history, as it was my invariable rule to draw no conclusions, except from facts, of which I gave unanswerable proof. I acted precisely in the same manner in regard to a quotation from the *Moniteur* in ch. xi. note 6. : and, as I was there likewise unacquainted with the author, I applied the same caution, and, though the quotation contained strong internal marks of credibility, I again said, "as it is not an *official* document, I shall make no further use of it." These are the only two instances of anonymous quotations, or of quotations which I could not warrant, throughout my whole work ; and, as I in both cases distinguished them from authentic documents, as I cautioned the reader in regard to his own use of them, and made no use of them myself in any conclusions which I drew, my conduct on those occasions deserved rather commendation, than censure.

Under these circumstances, no adversary, who possessed the least candour, would have selected

selected one of those examples as a subject of animadversion; and still less would he have suppressed the declaration, which I made on each occasion. But Mr. Bellham has chosen to be guilty of both offences: for in p. 29. he says very sneeringly, and apparently with great triumph, "Those persons who are curious to know the *authentic* particulars of this incomprehensible plot, must apply to very high authority indeed. The King of England, says Mr. Marsh, quoting from *the nameless author of a nameless tract*," &c. He then produces the quotation, which he closes with another sneer: but he takes no notice whatsoever of the declaration, which I had made in respect to its *not* being an authentic document. Thus he has represented the matter in a totally false light: and as he has likewise passed over in silence all the official documents, which I have quoted in the same chapter, he has given his readers to understand, not only, that I ascribed authenticity to a document, which I had openly disavowed, but that this document was the *only one*, which

I had been able to produce.—An advocate who feels himself reduced to the necessity of taking such desperate measures as these, must be conscious to himself, that he is defending a desperate cause.

Before I conclude the present subject, I will take the liberty of giving Mr. Belsham one piece of advice. Though he has endeavoured to ridicule my conduct, he will do well to follow it, and to let his readers know what is authentic, and what is *not* authentic, in *his own* works.

CHAPTER XL

Mr. Belsham has made no formal objection to any thing, which I have said in this chapter. But he has made two assertions relative to the subject of it, which require a few words in answer.

He says, p. 29, that the extravagancies of the National Convention would never have been committed, if Lord Gower had remained in Paris. Now this is an assertion, which it is impossible to prove, and which no man, who has accurately studied the principles

principles and springs of action of that turbulent assembly will ever believe.

But when he asserts (p. 31) that the alien bill, and the other bills, which were introduced at the end of December, 1792, "*were passed in direct and acknowledged defiance of the commercial treaty,*" he repeats a proposition which I had already proved to be absurd. In chap. xi. note 32. I quoted the *French* alien bill, which passed May 18, 1792, six months *before* the English alien bill was even proposed: and hence I very justly concluded, that as the French themselves had already violated the treaty of commerce by their *own* alien bill, which was full as strong as the British alien bill, the treaty had ceased, at least in *this* respect, to be binding on Great Britain, and consequently that, when they complained of the British alien bill, as a violation of the treaty of commerce, they were guilty of a manifest absurdity.

If Mr. Belsham was ignorant of all this, he should have studied my history a little more before he ventured to write remarks

on it: and if he was not ignorant of what has been just mentioned, he should not have ventured to repeat the absurd proposition. But he has neglected this rule throughout the whole of his pamphlet; for he is continually making assertions, which had been already confuted in my History. For this reason it seems almost unnecessary to go on replying to each single objection: indeed it is so, if regard be had only to the readers of that history. But, as I cannot flatter myself, that the generality of Mr. Belsham's readers have devoted much attention to a work, which their favorite historian says is so very "*fatiguing*," I am compelled to proceed on *their* account, whose esteem is not an object of indifference to *me*, though Mr. Belsham has declared* that *my* esteem is a matter of perfect indifference to *him*.

CHAP. XII.

This chapter, which is a very important one, and is replete with facts and docu-

ments, which prove that the French rulers were resolved at all events on a war with England, must have been considered by Mr. Belsham, as one of the *minutiae*, of which he speaks at the beginning of his pamphlet: For he has made *no* direct objection to any thing which I have said in it. He has made indeed a few efforts to palliate the conduct of the French rulers; but those efforts are so awkward, that, if his clients were now alive, they would hardly thank their advocate for his trouble.

His attention is first directed to the infamous decree of Dec. 15, 1792, which was a declaration of war, not only on all existing governments, but on all nations which refused to rebel against those governments. This decree Mr. Belsham represents as a consequence of the measures taken about this time by the British Parliament. For after having noticed (p. 29) the meeting of Parliament on Dec. 13, the speech from the throne (p. 30) and the measures taken by Parliament (p. 31) namely, the resolutions for an augmentation of the naval and military

tary force, the passing of the alien bill, and the bill for preventing the circulation of assignats, and the exportation of arms and corn to France, "by great and decisive majorities in both houses," Mr. Bellsham adds, immediately after the words just quoted, "*These measures* were not of a nature to pass unnoticed in the National Convention of France. On the 15th December, the principles of Jacobinism still rapidly gaining ground in that assembly, a decree passed," &c. Now the curiosity is, that *these measures*, which according to Mr. Bellsham produced their effect in the National Convention on Dec. 15, took place, one and all of them, *after* that day. The alien bill, which was the first of those four bills, was not even proposed before Dec. 19, and it did not get through both houses before Jan. 4, 1793. All this Mr. Bellsham might have known, if he had read chap. xi. of my history a little more attentively. But, in fact, there was no necessity for inquiring into the particular days, on which those bills were carried "by great and decisive majorities."

majorities in both houses," because, as the Parliament did not meet till Dec. 13, every one who is acquainted with the usual business at the commencement of a session, must know, that no bill could be brought in before Dec. 15; and even then we must allow two days at least, for a courier to carry the intelligence to Paris. Further, as the decree, which passed in the Convention on Dec. 15, must have been drawn up, at the latest, on the preceding evening, it is impossible that even the debates on the address should have been known at that time in Paris. Lastly, what renders Mr. Belsham's blunder still more extraordinary is, that he himself, only two pages before, had expressly mentioned the day on which the Parliament met.

As serious argumentation therefore does not appear to answer Mr. Belsham's purpose, he has recourse a few lines afterwards to wit; and says jocosely, that in the decree of Dec. 15, "a strong and facile imagination, like that of Mr. Marat, might suppose an oblique threat to England included."—Now this decree was a confirmation, and an extension

extension of the decree of November 19, and the National Convention, on Dec. 24, 1792, virtually declared that it *was* their intention to apply the decree of Nov. 19, to Great Britain. For when M. Baraillon proposed on that day, to limit the decree to the nations with which France was actually at war, and made his motion expressly on the ground, that the decree gave offence to the British government, the proposal was rejected even without a debate.* It appears then, that a man must have a very *facile* imagination, if he can work it up to a belief, that a threat to England was *not* intended, and even something more than an *oblique* one.

This *facile* imagination leads Mr. Bellham, a few lines afterwards, (p. 32,) to adopt an hypothetical mode of reasoning,

* Chap. xii. note 36, Mr. Bellham, in order to palliate the conduct of the National Convention on this occasion, says (p. 32) that the proposition of M. Baraillon was rejected, as being " *intentionally* designed;" but he has not told us, in what this imagined intention consisted.

and

and to say, in justification of the French rulers, that "if England joined the coalition of despots, they meant, no doubt, to class her, as she classed herself." But the fact is, the French rulers classed England, as she did *not* class herself; for on Nov. 28, 1792, they applied the decree of Nov. 19, to England, though by their own acknowledgment, the English government, at that time, had not departed from the strictest neutrality.*

"The conduct of the executive government was however (says Mr. B. p. 33) far more temperate than that of the legislative, and indeed highly laudable, considering their circumstances," &c. To enable the reader to judge of the accuracy of this assertion, he need only have recourse to the commentary, with which the *temperate and laudable* Executive Council† accompanied the decree of Dec. 15; or to the cir-

* Chap. iv. note 11.

† It then consisted of Le Bon, Monge, Gault, Pache, Claviere, and Roland.

cular letter of Monge ; or to Le Brun's order for an appeal to the English nation : and the reader will discover, in all these, at least as much violence as in any of the decrees of the National Convention. Mr. B. therefore should not have added, " considering these
 " circumstances, and the absolute necessity
 " the members of the council were under
 " of conforming in a certain degree to the
 " humours and caprices of a disorderly de-
 " mocratic assembly ;" for, so far were the members of the council from conforming in a certain degree, that they went at least equal, and in some cases still greater lengths, than the Convention itself.

In addition to the examples just mentioned, it will be necessary to take particular notice of the following : because Mr. Belsham has taken great pains in the distortion of it. On January 10, 1793, while the negotiation with Great Britain was pending, the Executive Council sent to general Miranda, who, in the absence of Dumouriez, commanded in the Netherlands, an order to put his troops immediately in motion,

tion, and to invade the Dutch territory.* This order was remarkable, on various accounts: In the first place, the Executive Council had only thirteen days before, namely, in the note presented on Dec. 27, by M. Chauvelin to Lord Grenville, given the most solemn promise, "*not to attack Holland, while that power confined itself, on its part, within the bounds of strict neutrality:*" And Brissot himself acknowledged in the National Convention, two days after the order for the invasion of Holland had been signed, that the Dutch government had, even till then, preserved the most strict neutrality.* Here then we have *one* infamous violation of a solemn promise, on the part of the *laudable* Executive Council.* Further, this same Council, in the note signed by Le Brun on January 7, had again alluded to its declaration respecting Holland; had again expressed its *sincere* desire to maintain peace and harmony between France and England; had again professed to renounce all conquests. Yet only three days after the repetition of these assurances, before

* See ch. xiii, note 42.

the British government could give any answer, and indeed before the note of Jan. 7, had been delivered to Lord Grenville, dared to order the immediate invasion of a country allied to England by the most solemn treaties. Surely we cannot have a stronger instance of perfidy and hypocrisy; nor can we have a stronger proof that the Executive Council had determined to commence hostilities, without any regard to the result of the negotiation. Indeed Dumouriez has made no scruple to acknowledge it; for he has positively declared, that Le Brun desired him, "*to pay no regard to the negotiations with England and Holland.*"*

In order to remove all doubts on this subject, I quoted at full length, in chap. xii. the order of the Executive Council,† from which it appears, not only that the order was absolute, but that Miranda was commanded to put it in execution *as soon as possible*. One of the expressions communicated

* See chap. xii. note.

† In the notes, § 2, I quoted it also in the original French.

to Miranda was, "*There is no time to lose.*" And another, "*The whole depends on promptitude and secrecy.*" Further, Miranda was specially directed to reach with his army the province of Zealand *within twelve days at furthest*; And the reason of this haste was expressly assigned, namely, that it was intended to take the Dutch by surprise, before they had time to send troops to the island of Walcheren, and to fortify it. All these instructions Miranda himself afterwards published; and as I produced them all in chap. xii. in English, as well as in French, it was impossible that Mr. Belsham should have remained ignorant of them.

Yet this gentleman has ventured, not indeed where he professedly treats of ch. xii. but in another part of his pamphlet,* to term the order sent to Miranda "*a provisional order*:" and to convert the "twelve

* P. 77—79, more than forty pages beyond the place, where he treats of ch. xii. His reason for removing the consideration of this subject to such a distance from the place, to which it properly belongs, I am unable to assign.

days, which Miranda was commanded *not to exceed*, into twelve days, which Miranda was ordered *to wait*. Nor does Mr. Bellham scruple to assert, that the French government allowed the twelve days "*for the express purpose of receiving an answer*" from England. And in order to impress this idea more strongly on the minds of his readers he says, p. 78, "*that interval of time being no doubt deemed sufficient for the reception of the ultimatum of England.*"—Here Mr. Bellham has outdone himself; and I confess that, though the long habit of hearing the grossest falsehoods during an eight years war, has enabled me to bear them with almost a stoical apathy, I found it difficult to suppress my feelings, when I first observed this shameful distortion, this daring defiance of documents, of which the writer could not have been ignorant. Indignation however soon yielded to another emotion, when I perceived that Mr. Bellham himself, immediately before the words "*that interval of time, &c.*" had literally copied the expression used in the order sent to Miranda

"twelve

twelve days *at farthest*." For by preserving this expression entire, he has let every thinking reader discover, without any other aid, that Miranda was limited, not in regard to how *soon*, but in regard to how *late*, the attack on Holland was to commence: and consequently in his attempt to persuade the public, that Miranda was ordered to *wait* twelve days, he has shewn as great a want of dexterity, as of something else:

But in another effort, which he has made to vindicate this order of the Executive Council, he has displayed some little dexterity, though little or no logic. It consists in an argumentum ad hominem, which Mr. B. has introduced apparently with great triumph. In ch. xli. where I gave a full account of the order in question, I said,
 " France by declaring itself in a state of war
 " with Holland virtually declared itself in a
 " state of war with England. The com-
 " mon interest, and the mutual obligations,
 " which then united these two countries,
 " made them really *one nation*, in regard to
 " an invasion on the part of France, and an
 " attack

"attack on Holland in Jan. 1793, was as
 "much an attack on Great Britain, as a decla-
 "ration of war against Holland in the present
 "year would be a declaration of hostilities
 "against France." This passage Mr. Bel-
 sham has endeavoured to convert against
 me: for he expresses his surprise (p. 79)
 that I should blame the order given by the
 Executive Council on Jan. 10, 1793, when
 I myself, as Mr. B. declares, have offered
 "*the best defence of this measure*" by stating
 that "the mutual obligations, which then
 united the two countries made them really
one nation." And he is so pleased with this
 argumentum ad hominem, that he has re-
 peated it p. 99, where he says, "the *only*
 "ground, on which the subsequent invasion
 "of Holland could be *plausibly* vindicated,"

* As Mr. B. says here "the *only* ground," he must
 either have forgotten or abandoned, when he came to
 p. 99, the argument of the *necessity* days, which he had
 applied twenty pages before. And even his argumen-
 tum ad hominem must by that time have lost a part of
 its value, in the estimation of the author, as he him-
 self claims no other title for it than that of a *plausible*
 vindication.

“ was that the reciprocal engagements be-
 “ tween that country and Great Britain
 “ were so close, and intimate, that, as Mr.
 “ Marill himself acknowledges, the two
 “ nations, in a political view, could only be
 “ considered as *one*.”

Now, though this circumstance would have justified England in *defending* Holland, when the latter was *attacked* by France, yet before it can be applied in vindication of the order given on January 10 for the *invasion* of Holland, it must be shewn, that the Executive Council would have acted in a justifiable manner, if they had signed an order on that very day, for the invasion of England. For unless this be true, it is manifest, that the connexion of Holland with England could afford no pretence whatever for an attack on Holland.* But Mr. Belsham

* The major proposition of the syllogism will in that case totally fail. Mr. B's argument, when stated logically, will run thus :

It would have been justifiable in the Executive Council to have signed an order for the invasion of England on Jan. 10, 1793.

himself would find it difficult to find a plausible argument, in favour of the opinion, that the Executive Council, after having declared in the Note of Jan. 7, its *sincere desire* to maintain peace with England, would have acted even with common decency, if they had declared war against England, only three days afterwards, before an answer to their Note either had been, or could have been received. And even if the French Government had had the most just cause for attacking England on Jan. 10, 1793, yet the defensive (not offensive) treaty between England and Holland, though it rendered them one nation, as far as related to mutual succour, if either party was attacked by a third, yet it did not render them ~~one~~ nation in such a sense, that any cause of complaint against the one warranted an attack on the other, especially when the most solemn pro-

But England and Holland, made at that time, in a political view, only ~~one~~ nation.

Therefore the order, signed by the Executive Council on Jan. 10, 1793, for the invasion of Holland, was justifiable.

Chiff

power had been given, not to attack that other power, as long as that other power remained neutral, which it did, by the acknowledgement of the French themselves. In short Mr. Bellham's argument about the "one nation" is nothing more than a lilly quibble.

But what excited my surprise infinitely more than this quibble, was to find Mr. Bellham turning all at once the accuser of the Executive Council, and that too in a sentence, which every one would take for a continuation of the arguments in its defence. "It may be farther allowed (continues Mr. B. p. 78) that this secret order was in fact worse than an open declaration; for as he (Mr. Marsh) gravely remarks, an open declaration gives the attacked power at least a short notice of the intended hostilities; which was probably the reason, why the Executive Council preferred the former." Here then Mr. B. admits that the secret order signed by the Executive Council was *worse*, than an open declaration would have been, because the latter would have given the attacked power

at least a short notice of the intended hostilities: and he is of opinion that the Executive Council preferred the former, that is, the *secret* order, for that very reason, namely, that the Dutch might be taken by surprise. Surely Mr. B. was not aware of what he was doing, when he inserted this sentence in his defence of the Executive Council. In fact, there is a sort of confusion in the passage, which made me at first take it for nonsense: and that confusion, as it must have previously existed in the mind of the writer, was probably the very impediment, which prevented him from perceiving the tendency of his own operations.

I fear that the reader is as tired, as myself, of this order of the Executive Council: but as Mr. B. has not yet done with it, and I am in duty bound to follow him step by step, I cannot immediately desist. However, there are only two more trifles to notice, and then we shall have done with the present chapter.

Mr. Bellham, in a tone of irony, which is useful enough where solid arguments are wanting, expresses his surprise, that the

perfidious

“*perfidious Council*” did not commence hostilities six weeks sooner, especially as I said in another place, that the naval armament of France commenced three months before that of England: and he adds triumphantly that I have not thought proper to assign the reason of this delay. But if Mr. B. will read my History a little more attentively, he will find the reason assigned, in more places than one: he will find that it was the object of the Executive Council, to wait only, *till the plan of attack was ripe for execution.*

There remains only to notice a curious gloss, which Mr. B. has put upon the following passage of the twelfth chapter. “Under these circumstances it would have been perfectly justifiable to have declared war against France in the middle of January 1793.” These circumstances, which I had expressly assigned, were; first, the order signed on January 10, for the invasion of Holland: and secondly, several other circumstances, all of which tended to prove, that the French government was resolved at all events to involve England, as well as Holland,

Holland, in a war with France. But Mr. B. has thought proper, after quoting (p. 79) the passage in question, to assure his readers that "these circumstances" were the following: namely, "the British Government
 " had the fairest possible opening for termi-
 " nating all disputes between the two coun-
 " tries, and even between France and the
 " other continental powers, by an amicable
 " and equitable accommodation, and the
 " French Government had allowed twelve
 " days for the express purpose of receiving an
 " answer."—Now, if we say nothing of Mr. Belfham's attempt to misrepresent the circumstances, on which my observation was founded, we must at least think it extraordinary, that, after the order for the commencement of hostilities had been actually signed, there should have been *the fairest possible opening for terminating all disputes*. And as to the *twelve days*, that point has been already settled.

CHAPTER XIII.

Though this chapter is a very long one, and contains, not only a full statement of all the diplomatic communications, which took place between Great Britain and France before the commencement of hostilities, but likewise a long series of remarks, in which I compared the *actions* of the French rulers with their *professions*, Mr. Belsham has made only *two* direct attacks on any thing which I have said in it. However, notwithstanding his inability to confute my assertions, he has adopted a very ingenious method, from which he probably expected very great success. As the Notes, which passed on this occasion between the British and French governments were accompanied in my History with a continued commentary, and this commentary contained a number of stubborn facts, which were very inimical to the cause of my adversaries, Mr. Belsham has deemed it expedient to substitute after each of

of the diplomatic Notes,* a commentary of his own; and he probably hopes to supersede the former commentary, in the same manner, as Fabre d'Églantine, the great re-former of the French calendar, got quit of the saints by substituting pease and onions. The whole of this new commentary therefore, which consists of pure argument, shall be minutely examined, as soon as I have repelled the two attacks above mentioned; which indeed are not very formidable, as

* As Mr. B. has thought proper to fill five and twenty pages of his pamphlet with a re-impression of these Notes, he should certainly have given a complete and correct copy of them. But I have collated what Mr. B. has given p. 33—39, as a copy of Mr. Chauvelin's Note of Dec. 27, 1792, and have found it very defective. Mr. Chauvelin, according to Mr. B. p. 35, "*begins* by declaring," That the French Government, &c. But in reality Mr. Chauvelin *begins* with a paragraph, which Mr. Belsham has wholly omitted. He has likewise omitted several passages in the body of the Note, without giving any indication of such omissions. And what he has given is not always in the precise words of the original. From such a garbled copy it is impossible to form an adequate idea of Mr. Chauvelin's Note.

they are made only *en passant*, in two marginal notes, the one in page 66, the other in page 67.

The first of them is made on an *inference*, which I drew in ch. xiii, note 77, from the following assertion of Le Brun, the French minister for foreign affairs; that a rupture with England would be more contrary to the inclination than to the *interest* of the republic.—Having proved by unanswerable documents quoted in the tenth chapter, that Le Brun and many other leading men in France, entertained the *delusive hopes*, as Mr. Miles expresses it,* that a declaration of war against England would be immediately followed by an insurrection in this country, I took for granted that Le Brun, when he used the word "*interest*" in the above-mentioned declaration, had those *delusive hopes* in view. And as the tenth and twelfth chapters of my History con-

* Mr. Miles's testimony on this subject has been quoted, in the present pamphlet, in the vindication of ch. x.

tained proof, (which Mr. B. himself had not attempted to confute) that the French rulers had not only an insatiable thirst after conquest and dominion in general, but that they were determined to engage in a war with England in particular, I considered the unguarded expression, used by Le Brun, as an indication, that the execution of their plans against England, (the existence of which had been proved by other means) was *not far distant*.—Such was the substance of my argument! and I leave it to the reader to determine, whether Le Brun's expression, when all circumstances are considered, contained such an indication, or not. Mr. B. indeed answers in the negative, and says p. 60, that such reasoning as I have here* displayed

* Mr. B. declares likewise that "of similar instances the volumes of Mr. M. are fertile." Now if in the present instance my reasoning is solid, the greater the number of similar instances, the worse it will be for Mr. Bellham. On the other hand, if in the present instance my mode of reasoning should be deemed incorrect, Mr. B. will not be enabled to argue from it to

displayed "demonstrates that nothing can be so plainly expressed, as to be incapable of perversion." But he has neither proved my perversion, nor confuted my argument. He has displayed nothing more than an attempt, to convert the argument into ridicule by an imperfect representation of it. There is no necessity therefore for saying a word more on the subject.

Mr. Belfham's second attack, which is likewise on an inference, is directed against the 108th note to ch. xii. where I made some remarks on the following declaration of the Executive Council. "It has renounced, and still renounces all conquest : "and its occupying the Netherlands will "continue no longer, than the war, and "during that time, which may be necessary "for the Belgians to secure and consolidate "this liberty : after which, provided they "be independent or happy, France will be

other examples, which he has not produced. It is easy to make general assertions : the difficulty is, to prove them by descending to particulars.

"Insufficiently

"sufficiently rewarded."—On this subject Mr. Belsham has informed his readers p. 67, that, "Mr. M. has boldly asserted that at the very time the Executive Council wrote thus sentimentally on the pretended independence of the Belgians, it was fully determined to incorporate Belgia into France." Mr. B. then immediately adds: "To talk or to write very sentimentally is indeed always a just ground of suspicion." Here his readers may naturally imagine, that I had argued from the sentimental mode of writing adopted by the Executive Council: whereas the whole of my proof was founded on *facts*; and moreover on facts, which Mr. B. himself has not presumed to call in question. He says indeed, that the French government would have given up the annexation of the Netherlands to France, rather than involve the country in a war with the maritime powers: and, what is truly curious, he declares, that the documents, which I have produced, tend only to confirm this opinion. Not to trouble the reader however with a repetition of all the documents, which

by the French commissaries at Brussels till Feb. 3, 1793, two days after the French Convention had declared war, it is the most futile that can be imagined. The mere circumstance, that a secret intention, as Dumouriez calls it, was not formally put in execution till Feb. 3, 1793, cannot afford even a presumption, that no such intention previously existed. Besides, though the French Commissaries did not meet at Brussels to settle the question before Feb. 3, 1793, they had received their instructions above three weeks before; and the special instructions given to Chauvart, who was the leading man, and who afterwards published the whole proceedings, are dated Dec. 31, 1793. But, for further particulars on this subject, I must refer to Ch. XIII. Note 108.

Having repelled the objections, which Mr. B. has made to my Commentary on the diplomatic papers, which passed between the British and French Governments, I proceed to the examination of his Commentary on the same papers, so which, I fear, I shall have a much greater number than two objections to make.

As the negotiation, which was conducted by Lord Grenville and Mr. Chauvelin, did not prevent the breaking out of hostilities, Mr. Belsham's avowed object is to transfer the blame of its failure from the French to the British Government: and his zeal for this noble cause has roused him to more strenuous exertions, than he appears to have displayed in all the rest of his pamphlet put together.

After laying before the reader a copy, though an incorrect one, of Mr. Chauvelin's Note of December 27, 1792, he begins at page 39, to make his remarks on it. He previously admits "the rudeness of Mr. Chauvelin's language: but notwithstanding his rudeness, his Note, says Mr. B. certainly contained *great concessions*, especially if we consider them as made voluntarily at the commencement of a negotiation, and when the progress of their arms had received no check." These great concessions, according to Mr. Belsham's statement, were as follow.—First, "the offensive meaning of the decret of the 19th November was formally and expressly disavowed." Secondly, a positive and voluntary declaration

.. G 2 ..

(was

was made, " that France would not attack Holland, if that power did not violate its neutrality." " Lastly, (says Mr. B.) by professing to treat the opening of the Schelde as a *trivial question*, the memorial furnishes a ready salvo, for the French honour, if the French Government should in the progress of the negotiation consent to abandon it." — Now it is true that the Executive Council endeavoured to explain away the meaning of the decree in question: but since Mr. B. himself admits, not only that this decree, in its first and obvious meaning, is *indefensible**, but even that the interpretation of it by the Executive Council " appears somewhat *strained and forced* †," it is extraordinary that he should yet set such a value on this pretended great concession. But if Mr. B. had not thus confuted his own argument, it would be unnecessary to say any thing more on this subject, as I have already given abundant proof, in the notes to Ch. XIII. that the Executive Council, in its explanation of the decree, was guilty of the blackest hypocrisy.

and made declarations with the consciousness of their falsehood. But, says Mr. B. again, p. 39, " If France really wished to break with England, it is the grossest of solecisms to believe, that she would have degraded herself (for in the light of a degradation it must in that case appear to her) by such a disavowal." It is the grossest of solecisms then to believe in the truth: for the French rulers not only wished, but were determined to break with England, at the very time they disavowed the application of the decree to England. But what most clearly shews the absurdity, and in fact the infamy, of the *disavowal* brought forward in Mr. Chauvelin's Note of Dec. 27, is the formal *avowal*, made in the National Convention only three days before, that it was their real intention to apply the decree to England*. Besides, it is ridiculous to found an argument on the supposition, that the French rulers would not have chosen to *degrade* themselves; for, as French philosophy and French republicanism triumphed over

* See Ch. xii. Note 36.

honour and religion, they did not consider themselves as degraded by falsehood and hypocrisy.

The declaration respecting Holland, which, according to Mr. Belsham, is the second of the *great concessions*, proves only the duplicity, with which the Executive Council acted toward the British Government: and Mr. B. would have acted wisely, if he had been silent upon this article, as well as on the preceding: for it was only fourteen days after the solemn promise had been given, *not* to attack Holland, that positive orders were sent for the immediate invasion of it*.

Lastly, when Mr. Belsham talks about the Executive Council's "professing to treat the opening of the Schelde as a *trivial question*," one can hardly hear it without a smile. If such a concession is at all satisfactory, the Emperor of Russia has nothing more to do, than to *profess*, in imitation of the French Executive Council, to treat the seizure of our mer-

* This subject was fully discussed above, in the Vindication of Ch. xii.

chant ships as a *trivial question*, and whatever importance we may attach to it, we must still rest satisfied with his professions. But, says Mr. B. "by professing to treat the opening of the Schelde as a *trivial question*, the memorial furnishes a ready salvo for *French honour*, &c." Now this salvo for *French honour* was very unfortunately chosen; for, according to Mr. Belsham's own account in another place,* the salvo contains a *falsehood*.

It appears then, that Mr. Belsham's remarks on the Note of Mr. Chauvelin have rendered no service to the cause, which they were designed to promote. Let us next hear what he has to say on Lord Grenville's reply, which he has presented to his readers in p. 41—49. In the first place, Mr. B. complains that Lord Grenville put the worst possible construction upon the decree of November 19; that he took for granted England was included in the scope of it; and that he re-

* Mr. B. says, p. 64, "The French Government had styled the opening of the Schelde a trivial question, which it certainly was not."

refused to admit any explanation, which might tend to remove or rectify whatever outrage had been occasioned by it. — But Lord Grenville put no other construction on the decree, than that which the French rulers themselves openly put on it in the National Convention*: when he took for granted that England was included in the scope of it, he was authorised, not only by the conduct of the National Convention on Nov. 28, but by the unanimous resolution which passed in the Convention† on Dec. 24: and, when he refused to admit Mr. Chauvelli's explanation, it was because the explanation contained the grossest falsehoods.

* See Ch. xiii. Note 41.

† Ch. xii. Note 36. Though this resolution, which was an official avowal on the part of the National Convention, that the decree of Nov. 19, should really be applied to England, was not unknown to Mr. Bellham, for he has quoted it, p. 32; yet he has dared to assert, p. 53, that “that this decree could not with any plausibility of construction be supposed to extend to England.” When an author makes assertions, which flatly contradict authentic documents, with which he himself is acquainted, what opinion must that man entertain of the persons, for whom he writes?

Mr.

Mr. B. complains (p. 50) of the "impolitic conduct of England, in refusing to recognise the provisional government of France," and says (p. 81) that "the English Government was *in consequence* treated upon many occasions, in that assembly, with great rudeness and indignity." Now if Mr. Belsham means that Lord Grenville's note contained a refusal to acknowledge the new French Government, he is incorrect. Lord Grenville declared indeed, that Mr. Chauvelin, who had then no other credentials, than those which he had received from Louis XVI. could not be admitted to treat under the form stated in his note: but he expressly said at the same time, that he reserved the question, whether the British Cabinet would acknowledge the French Republic, for future discussion. But even if Lord Grenville had at that time (as he did afterwards under different circumstance) answered the question in the negative, still the insults and indignities offered to the British government, could not be considered as a *consequence* of the refusal, because very great insults and indignities had been offered to the British Government

vernment in the preceding month of November, before the British Government had been even asked, whether it would acknowledge the French Republic or not. On the other hand, if Mr. Belsham alludes to a different period from that to which the present subject relates, if he has in view the recall of Lord Gower, and considers that step as a tacit refusal to acknowledge the French Republic, enough has been said on that subject in Ch. IX. To his assertion (p. 51), that Mr. Chauvelin "ought to have been acknowledged as the accredited minister of the French Republic," I answer, that it was *impossible* to receive him in that character, before he was invested with it; but when Lord Grenville sent his note of Dec. 31, 1792, Mr. Chauvelin had received no credentials from the new government of France,* as Le Brun himself acknowledged in his note of Jan. 7, 1793. For a confutation of Mr. B's opinion that an ambassador should have been sent to Paris, I

* Mr. Chauvelin did not produce credentials from the new Government of France, till Jan. 17, 1793, when the question of war or peace was already decided.

must refer the reader to what was said on that subject in the latter part of Ch. XI.

Mr. B. complains (p. 41) that Lord Grenville put a most harsh and *unwarrantable* interpretation on the explanation, which was given of the decree of Nov. 19. But Lord Grenville's interpretation was warranted by undeniable *facts*, of which I have given a very copious collection in the notes to Ch. XIII. He further complains (p. 52) of Lord Grenville's alluding, as he says, "in the most invidious manner, in this moment of *amicable* *eclaircissement*, to the most invidious proceedings of the Convention, proceedings which he knew the Executive Council could not controul." Now as the explanations which were given in Mr. Chauvelin's note, contained the grossest falsehoods, as, instead of offering indemnity for the past and security for the future, they increased only the insults which had been already offered to the British Government, they furnished a very curious kind of *amicable éclaircissement*. It is likewise very extraordinary that Lord Grenville should be blamed for alluding to the obnoxious proceedings

ceedings of the French Convention. For whether the Executive Council could controul them or not, yet, as this council professed it to be their object, in the negotiation then pending, to remove the complaints of the British Government, relative to the decree of November 19, and other acts of the Convention, an allusion to those acts in Lord Grenville's reply was perfectly consistent. But it is in fact absurd to talk about the inability of the Executive Council, to check the violent proceedings of the Convention, when this Council had no desire to check them: for it went still greater lengths than the Convention itself, as appears from a comparison of its commentary on the decree of Dec. 15, with the decree itself.

To make Lord Grenville appear ridiculous, Mr. B. has taken the liberty (p. 52) to alter his Lordship's words, and to make him declare "that England must consider the *disavowal* of the French Government as a *fresh avowal* of those dispositions, which she sees with so just an uneasiness and jealousy." This pretty antithesis is entirely the work of Mr. Belsham.

shame for the words used by Lord Grenville were, " England cannot consider such an *explanation* as satisfactory, but must look upon it as a fresh *avowal* of those dispositions, which she sees with so just an uneasiness and jealousy." And that the *explanation*, or rather pretended explanation, offered by the Executive Council, really did contain a fresh *avowal* of a disposition, on the part of the French rulers, to encourage disorder and revolt in every country, Lord Grenville had shewn immediately before the passage, which Mr. B. has so inaccurately reported.

Mr. B. is of opinion (p. 52) that all discussions about the opening of the Schelde, should have been deferred to a later period: and he censures Lord Grenville for dwelling upon this point. But it was not merely the *fact* itself, which, as being an infringement on the rights of the Dutch, we were bound by treaty to oppose; it was the *principle* established by it, which demanded the attention of the British Government: for the principle was nothing less, than that the French had a right to infringe the most solemn treaties, and to act as the

the arbitrators of all Europe. Surely such a principle as this could not be opposed too soon: and it would have been well for Europe, if this principle, on which the French have continued to act, had been more generally opposed, than it has been.

Lastly, Mr. Belsham objects to the *terms of peace*, which were offered by the British Government: and he, says (p. 52) that "they contain a proposition too extravagant to become the topic of serious deliberation." — Now these terms were delivered in the following sentence of Lord Grenville's Note. "If France is really desirous of maintaining friendship and peace with England, she must shew herself disposed, to renounce her views of aggression and aggrandizement, and confine herself within her own territory, without insulting other governments, without disturbing their tranquillity, without violating their rights." These conditions were, on the one hand, necessary for the security of Great Britain; and, on the other hand, they could not be considered as injurious to France, because they were nothing more, than what the

the French rulers themselves, from the commencement of the revolution, had declared to be the basis of their new system of politics. The renunciation of conquest and aggrandizement had been most solemnly professed in manifestoes, decrees, and every kind of document: and the Executive Council itself, in the Note of Jan. 7, 1793, again declared, that "*France has renounced and still renounces all conquest.*" In fact, therefore, the "extravagant proposition," as Mr. B. calls it, contained nothing more than a proposal, that France should remain true to its own principles.

Mr. Belsham having discussed the note of Lord Grenville, proceeds, after making a few quotations from a speech of Kerſaint, which are of no importance in the present inquiry, to lay before his readers the note of the Executive Council of Jan. 7, 1793. He calls it *the olive branch of reconciliation*;^{*} but he has

* It is to be observed that in this *olive branch* the terms of peace offered by the British Government were *rejected*; and at the same time a formal declaration was made in it, that if the explanations given by the Executive Council were not deemed satisfactory, and the pro-
parati

very little to say about it, and that little is contained in four marginal remarks. Moreover, two of those remarks have been already noticed at the beginning of this chapter, as they contain the two attacks upon me, which I there noticed. The third of them, which is in p. 261, contains an attack upon Lord Grenville, who is censured for his reply about the opening of the Schelde. In order to justify this censure, Mr. B. asserts, that the French Executive Council did not mean " strenuously to insist " on the opening of the Schelde : in proof of which assertion he appeals to his favorite argument—their professing to treat the subject as a *trivial question*—which, he says, is strong evidence, that they did not mean strenuously to insist upon their claim. This argument is too ridiculous to merit serious confu-

parations in the British ports, were not consequently discontinued, France would *prepare for war*, though it was manifest, that explanations replete with falsehood, could not be satisfactory, and that the British Government, after its proposals of peace had been rejected, could not consent to disarm, without exposing the kingdom to the danger of being invaded by France.

tation ;

tation ; and Mr. Belsham's assertion, that the French Government did not mean strenuously to insist on the opening of the Schelde, is made in defiance of documents, of which he could hardly have been ignorant. For not only did the Executive Council, in the note of Jan. 7, 1793, again insist, and very strenuously, on this point, but they sent instructions to Mr. Chauvelin, *not to recede from it*.* His fourth and last remark on the dispatch of the Executive Council, contains an attempt to account for some uncivil expressions in it, which he says Le Brun introduced merely because " without some slight expressions of resentment, he was probably apprehensive, that this paper might be considered as too tame and submissive." But Le Brun had certainly no reason to entertain any such apprehensions.

* This was particularly noted in chap. xiii. note 93, and this note relates to that very part of the dispatch of the Executive Council, to which Mr. Belsham's own remark relates. It is inconceivable therefore, that he should have been ignorant of it, unless (as is perhaps the case) he has read my History so very superficially, as to be unable to form any judgment about the matter.

Finally Mr. B. produces Lord Grenville's reply to the note of the Executive Council, and attempts, p. 72, "to criticise (as he says) somewhat in detail the contents of it." This criticism he begins with the following assertion. "Nothing being objected on the part of Lord Grenville, according to the observation of M. Le Brun, to the declaration respecting Holland, the dispute is reduced to two heads." Now it is true, that Le Brun did make the observation, which Mr. B. has here repeated; but in a long note, which I composed on that very observation,* and which Mr. B. therefore could hardly have overlooked, I clearly proved that Le Brun asserted a falsehood. Mr. Belsham therefore should not have repeated it, not even with the saving clause, "*according to the observation of M. Le Brun:*" for, though he has thus prudently transferred all responsibility to the French minister, he nevertheless leads his readers into error.

Mr. Belfham's next article of criticism relates to Lord Grenville's objection to the explanation, which had been given of the decree of Nov. 19. "That the decree, (says Mr. B. p. 72) in its first and obvious meaning was *indesensible*, is unquestionable; but, as the Government of France thought fit to put a friendly, however *forced*, interpretation upon it, *that interpretation ought undoubtedly to have been admitted.*" To give some kind of plausibility to this strange position he adds, p. 73, "When no *act* has been done, and nothing but a supposed principle, or general disposition is complained of, an express disavowal of such principle, and denial of such intention ought to be accepted, because it is all that the case admits of."—But surely Mr. Belfham, if he reflects one moment, will not pretend, that the decree of Nov. 19, was accompanied by no *act*, which proved, that the National Convention was determined to regulate its conduct by that decree. Was not every solemn reception of deputations from British societies, who at the bar

of the French Convention, declared their resolution to overturn the British Constitution, an *overt act*? Did not the numerous examples of encouragement, which was given to those societies, constitute *overt acts*? And was it not an *overt act*, when the President of the Convention, on Nov. 28, 1792, declared to one of those deputations, "that the time was not far distant, when Frenchmen would come to congratulate the National Convention of Great Britain?" Was it not again an *overt act*, when the French Convention, on Dec. 24, 1792, resolved that the ~~decree in~~ question, *should* be applied to Great Britain? If Mr. B. is not satisfied with such *acts* as these, I know not what will content him.

"But if a cavilling negotiator (replies Mr. B. p. 73), in the spirit of a chicaning attorney, will not allow the persons with whom he negotiates, to understand their own meaning, if he will obstinately insist, that they are incompetent to explain their own declarations, what can any farther discussion avail?" Here Mr. B. is rather incorrect.

correct. Lord Grenville by no means denied that the persons, with whom he negotiated, understood their own meaning: but he suspected, and with great reason, that what they *themselves* understood, was different from the meaning, which they endeavoured to impose upon him. Nor did he declare, that they were *incompetent* to explain their own declarations: he only asserted, what was perfectly true, that the explanations, which they thought proper to give, were *unsatisfactory*.

On Lord Grenville's complaint of the outrageous proceedings of the Convention, Mr. B. remarks, p. 74, "As England had no ambassador in France at that time, the English Court could have no regular or official information of what passed in the Convention, and could have *no regular right therefore to complain of it.*" As well might Mr. B. have said, that we had no regular right to complain of the seizure of all our merchant ships in the ports of Russia, because, when the order for such seizure was given, we had no ambassador at Petersburg. The *Moniteur*

contained official information enough in the one case, as the Petersburg Gazette did in the other.

With respect to Lord Grenville's observation on the infringing of treaties, and the violating the rights of our allies, Mr. B. admits, that the apology, which Le Brun had made on that subject, "though ingenious and plausible, was founded upon very *questionable and fallacious data.*" "But the validity of the *abstract* reasonings of the French Minister (continues Mr. B. p. 75,) is of very little consequence. The material question is, what are his *practical* concessions?" Now, if the term "*practical* concessions" conveys any meaning, it can signify only such concessions, as a man makes or expresses by his actual *practice* or conduct. But the misfortune is, the concessions made by the French Government in *words* were flatly contradicted by their *practice*: and Le Brun had the assurance, in his Note of January 7, to declare, "that France has renounced and still renounces all conquest;" when the Duchy of Savoy, about

about five weeks before, had been incorporated into France by a solemn and unanimous decree of the National Convention? If Lord Grenville therefore had given credit to this,

* Mr. Belsham, aware of this objection, as he had already sent it in my History, has very artfully said, p. 77, "It is probable indeed that France, even at this time, would not have receded from her plan of incorporating Savoy with her own domain." Here the use of the word "*plan*" must necessarily induce Mr. Belsham's readers to suppose, that when Le Brun signed the note of Jan. 7, 1793, the incorporation of Savoy was only in agitation; whereas the solemn act of incorporation, which I quoted in Ch. X. Note 3, passed in the preceding month of November. Such little artifices as these may be deemed expedient by Mr. Belsham: but he may be assured they will render him no service in the end. Further, to palliate the incorporation of Savoy, he adds, that it was "to England a very inferior consideration." Now no one will deny, that it was of much less importance to England, than the incorporation of the Netherlands. But what is that to our present purpose? Did the incorporation of Savoy cease therefore to contradict Le Brun's declaration, that "France has renounced, and still renounces *all* conquest?" Did it afford, therefore, a less valid proof, that the French rulers were insincere in their negotiations with England? Or was Lord Grenville the less authorized to reply, that Le Brun's declaration was unsatisfactory?

and other similar declarations of the French minister, he would have shewn, that he was no more qualified to conduct the negotiation, than Mr. Belsham himself would have been, who, speaking of the fine professions of Le Breu, says p. 76, that "an *able* statesman would have wished for no *fairer* opening for a general treaty."

Here ends the discussion of Mr. Belsham's commentary on the negotiation between Lord Grenville and Mr. Chauvelin: and the reader will now be able to determine, whether in his attempt to transfer the blame of its failure from the French to the British Government, he has met with the expected success.

CHAPTER XIV.

Mr. Belsham has objected to *three inferences* in this chapter.

This first objection relates to an inference, which I had deduced from the following circumstance; that the French Executive Council, on Jan. 2. 1793, the very day on which they signed that Note to the British Government,

ment, which Mr. B. calls *the olive-branch of reconciliation*, signed another Note destined for the French sea-ports, and of the same tendency as the circular Letter of Monge, the marine minister, which had been signed eight days before, and which contained the following passage. "*We will make a descent on that island; we will haul thither fifty thousand caps of liberty; we will plant there the sacred tree, and stretch out our arms to our brother republicans; the tyranny of their government shall soon be destroyed.*"* Hence I inferred† that the Executive Council, who in their Note of Jan. 7, to the British Government, pretended a respect for existing constitutions, and a desire to continue in peace with Great Britain, acted with glaring duplicity. And this duplicity was so manifest in the whole of their conduct, and the numerous examples which I alleged in Ch. XIII. are so decisive on the subject, that it seems almost im-

* It is to be observed that Monge was a leading member of the French Executive Council, whose conduct Mr. B. says (p. 33) was *far more temperate* than that of the Convention.

† Ch. XIV. Note 2.

possible to entertain a doubt upon it. Indeed, Mr. B. himself has not objected to any of the examples in Ch. XIII: but this *additional* example in Ch. XIV. was too much for him to bear, and he has accordingly burst forth (p. 85.) in the following strain. "Were the French
 " then to make no preparations for war, nor
 " to offer any incitement to the national ar-
 " mor, in the full prospect of a war, merely
 " because they were engaged in a negotiation
 " for peace? Is it fair or just to style *that* hy-
 " pocrify in France, which in any other nation
 " would be regarded as the result of prudence,
 " or indeed of common sense?"—No, Mr. Belsham, certainly not! But I hope we may be allowed to consider *that* as hypocrisy in the French rulers, which would be deemed hypocrisy in all other men. It may be readily admitted, that if the Executive Council, instead of acting offensively, had been threatened with an attack on our part, they would have acted wisely in making vigorous preparations in the ports of France. And even, though the French naval preparations commenced, not only three months before a single step had been taken in the

the British ports, but at a time, when the acknowledgment of the French Convention,* we had in no respect violated the neutrality toward France, it may be still admitted that those preparations *alone* are no proof that the French Cabinet was determined at all events on a war with Great Britain, or that the negotiation was commenced merely to amuse the British Government, till the plan of attack was ripe for execution. But when at the very outset of the negotiation before it was possible that Lord Grenville's answer to Mr. Chauvelin's *first* Note could be known in France, a circular Letter, signed by the Minister of the marine, and denouncing a fixed resolution to invade England, to join the disaffected, and to overthrow the government was sent to the sea-port towns of France when, in addition to this, a second letter of the same tendency was signed by the Executive Council on the very day, that the second Note to the British Government was signed. We cannot have stronger proofs, that the Executive Council did not wait the issue of

* See Ch. XL * Note 50.

negotiation to determine the question of peace or war, but that they had *previously* determined it. Consequently, when they professed a desire to continue at peace with Great Britain, their professions were fraught with hypocrisy. Mr. Bellingham perhaps will explain the conduct of the Executive Council on the hypothesis, that the French rulers themselves really *did* wish for peace; but that they believed the British Cabinet was resolved on war, and acted accordingly. Indeed he has very artfully insinuated this hypothesis on various occasions: but both parts of the hypothesis are false. That the French rulers breathed nothing but war, and war with all Europe, has been proved over and over again, in the seventh, tenth, twelfth, and fourteenth chapters of my History: Kerfaint, a leading orator of the Convention, acknowledged in his speech of Jan. 1, 1793, not only that "Mr. Pitt wished for peace", but that his councils governed the nation: even the violent dema-

He used the strong expression "maître absolu de l'Europe." Compare Ch. X. Note 47, with Ch. cent.

gogue,

gogue, Cerra, in his speech of Jan. 2, said to the Convention, "he assured that it is not the intention of the British Cabinet to go to war;"* and both Brissot and Dumouriez have acknowledged in their writings, that the French rulers, if they had chosen it, might have avoided a war with Great Britain.† The conduct of the Executive Council therefore, cannot be explained on the preceding hypothesis; and consequently the inference which I drew in regard to their duplicity, rests unimpaired. When Mr. Belsham then accused me (p. 85) in respect to this very inference, & suffering my prejudices to carry me such lengths of party zeal, he would have done well to have considered whether his zeal for *his* party was not carried to an injudicious excess. And when Mr. Belsham added, "it is necessary to read with extreme caution whatever he may write, and to credit rather what he shall prove than what he shall say," my gentle adversary should have recollected that in my History I have proved *every* thing, whereas Mr. Belsham, in his own History

* Ch. XI. Note 53. † Ch. XI. Note

proved nothing. I have made it a rule to support every fact by *authority*, which cannot be called in question: but Mr. Belsham has given only his *bare word*, which, if I may be permitted to use the same expression toward him as he has used toward me, the numerous examples of his incorrectness, alleged in this pamphlet, must induce even his admirers, to admit in future with *“extreme caution.”*

The second attack is likewise made on an inference relative to the duplicity of the French rulers, which I drew from two passages in the writings of Dumouriez. “This (says Mr. B. p. 86) is a mere wire-drawn conclusion of Mr. Marsh; for Dumouriez never represents France as insincere in her attempts to effect an accommodation, though he expressly charges Mr. Pitt with duplicity as to the negotiation, in which he himself was concerned.” Mr. B. then quotes the following passage from Dumouriez, in which the charge is contained: “On se verrait croire que le Ministre Pitt n’aurait qu’une amitié pour le Général Dumouriez.”—*“which is of no importance to my argument”* (which

(which is contained in the second paragraph of the fourteenth chapter) whether Dumouriez has represented the French rulers as insincere in their negotiation or not. But he really *has* represented them as insincere in the negotiation: for in the first volume of his *Memoirs*, where he speaks of his own residence in Paris, at the beginning of Jan. 1793, while Le Brun was carrying on the negotiation with England, and at the same time concerting measures with Dumouriez for the next campaign, he expressly says, that "*Le Brun desired the General to pay no regard to the negotiation.*" Surely there cannot be a stronger representation of insincerity, than this; nor a stronger proof that Le Brun carried on the negotiation merely to amuse the British Government. It is very extraordinary therefore, that Mr. B. should presume to declare that "Dumouriez never represents France as insincere in her attempts to effect an accommodation," because he could not have been ignorant of the passage just quoted, as it is quoted likewise in that very paragraph, where the present objection relates. — He is equal

prehensible for his *unqualified* repetition* of the charge, which Dumouriez has brought against Mr. Pitt relative to the negotiation, which Dumouriez himself set on foot: for not only does this charge contain a palpable falsehood, as I proved at length in Ch. XV. note 62, but Mr. Belsham himself *knows*, that it contains a falsehood.†

His third and last objection to Ch. XIV. relates to an inference, which I deduced from a speech delivered by Carra, a leading and vio-

* By the term "*unqualified* repetition," I mean a repetition of the charge, without qualifying it with any remark, whether it be true or false; whence Mr. Belsham's readers may imagine, that it is true, or at least that their author has no objection to make to it.

† I do not argue merely from the supposition that Mr. B. could not have been ignorant of the long Note (Ch. XV. Note 62) in which the proof of the falsehood was conducted at full length, but from a confession, which he himself has made in another part of his pamphlet: for in p. 114, where he again speaks of this charge, and again quotes the passage, "*Où pourroit croire, &c.*" he says, "*in this conjecture however, Dumouriez was probably mistaken.*" Why then did Mr. B. quote this mistaken conjecture in p. 86, without making one single remark on it?

lent member of the Convention, on Jan. 2,
 1792. If I understand Mr. B. rightly, he
 means, that my inference was too *general*, and
 that I argued from Carra's speech, in which
 regal power in general, and the British Go-
 vernment in particular, was grossly abused, as
 if that speech conveyed the sentiments of the
 major part of the Convention: for he says
 (p. 87) "as well might it have been inferred
 from the furious invective of Mr. Burke in
 the British House of Commons, February,
 1790, that the British *Parliament* had, at
 that period, determined upon a rupture with
 France." But if Mr. B. will condescend
 once more to read Ch. XIV. he will find, that
 the sentiments delivered by Carra were by no
 means confined to that orator: he will find
 quotations in that chapter from the speeches
 of Danton, Barrere, Barbaroux, Remi, Du-
 cos, Treilhard, Gregoire, and Brissot, which
 contain similar sentiments, though not so vio-
 lently expressed. And, if he is not satisfied
 with these quotations, he must certainly
 be convinced by the solemn declarations of
 the members of the National Assembly

on Sept. 4, 1792, exclaimed, as if by instantaneous impulse, that *they all swore hatred to kings and to royalty.** When Carra, therefore, expressed his hatred of his Britannic Majesty, he expressed the sentiments of the Convention at large, unless Mr. B. can prove, that notwithstanding "the licentious enthusiasm" of that democratic and anarchic body," (as Mr. Belsham himself speaks p. 28) a particular exception was made in favor of the King of Great Britain.

Mr. B. has concluded his remarks on Ch. XIV. with some extracts from a speech of Brissot, with which he has filled ten pages. His object, in so doing, as he says p. 88, was "to assist us in forming a judgment of the *real* views and intentions of the governing party in France." But as he tells us at the bottom of the page, that the first and main position of this speech† was "*contrary to the*

* I quoted this exclamation in Ch. XIV. Note 20, a few pages before the place, to which Mr. Belsham's objection relates; and therefore one can only suppose, that he was ignorant of it.

... "that the complaints of the British Cabinet
... have no just foundation."

real

real opinion of Mr. Brissot," it is not probable that many readers will follow the directions of Mr. Belsham, and have recourse to this speech of Brissot, in order to discover his *real* sentiments.

CHAP. XV.*

Though Mr. Belsham has made several objections to passages in this chapter, there is only one, which is of importance, or which affects the main question. It relates to the refusal of the British Cabinet on Jan. 20, 1793, to receive Mr. Chauvelin's new credentials, which refusal Lord Grenville signified to Mr. Chauvelin in the following words. "In answer to the demand you now make, whether his Majesty will receive your new letters of credence, I have to inform you, that *under the present circumstances*, his Majesty does not think proper to receive them." Now the question, whether this answer is defen-

* This is the last chapter which I have to vindicate; for Mr. Belsham has made 27 remarks on Ch. XVI. though the title of his fifth section (p. 101) professes to contain remarks on both.

false, or not, depends on the meaning, which
 ought to be affixed to the term, " present cir-
 cumstances." Mr. Belsham, aware of this,
 has deemed it expedient, at the very outset of
 his inquiry, (p. 101,) to interpret, "*under
 these circumstances,*" in the following manner:
 "*While a negotiation was depending between the
 two countries of the highest importance, and the
 success of which might depend on the recognition
 of the ambassador.*" But whatever are Mr.
 B. may have here displayed, he has certainly
 displayed very little candor; for he has as-
 cribed to Lord Grenville's words a meaning,
 which the writer himself could not possibly
 intend to express, and which indeed the words
 themselves do not admit. That on Jan. 20,
 1793, the day on which the refusal was made,
 the negotiation between Lord Grenville and
 Mr. Chauvelin was *still depending*, is an asser-
 tion, which I had fully confuted in the History
 of the Politicks of Great Britain and France.
 It was on Jan. 13, that the note of the Execu-
 tive Council, containing their ultimatum, was
 presented by Mr. Chauvelin to Lord Grenville;
 and that moment it was manifest, that it

was no longer in the power of the British ministers to prevent a rupture with France. The fate of the two countries was from that moment decided; and consequently we cannot reckon events, which took place in the latter half of January, among the *causes* of the war. They might serve indeed as pretexts to justify an aggression, but the *real* causes, which are enumerated in Chap. XIV. had already produced their full effect. It is useless therefore, in investigating the origin of the war, to insist on the refusal, expressed by the British Cabinet, on the 20th of January: but since Mr. Belsham, for want of better arguments, has thought proper to do it, and moreover to give a false explanation of the circumstances, under which the answer was given, I must beg leave to refer the reader to Chap. XV. where he will find a faithful description of the circumstances, which Lord Grenville had in view. And those circumstances, when fairly stated, will fully justify the conduct of the British Cabinet on that occasion.—To what Mr. Belsham objected in p. 102 and 103, it is unnecessary

* See the latter part of Ch. XII.

to make an answer, because those objections are founded on the false supposition, that the existing circumstances were such as he has described them.

In answer to an observation, which I had made, in regard to the tendency of great Republics, such as those of Rome, Carthage; and France, to disturb the repose of neighbouring nations, Mr. B. says, p. 104, " If we take a retrospective view of the history of France for the last two hundred and fifty years, what great Republic could be more restless in itself than this great monarchy for the first half of that term, or more disposed to disturb the peace of her neighbours, than she has most notoriously been for the latter part of it ?"—Now I cannot pretend to say what idea Mr. B. affixes to the terms *repose* and *disturbance*; but according to their common acceptation, I think it must be allowed, that the French Republic has so effectually disturbed the repose of her neighbours, as to have produced among them more civil revolutions within the compass of ten years, than the French monarchy did during the period of its existence.

Mr.

Mr. Beitham's next objection relates likewise to a cursory remark, which has no connexion with the main question. It is therefore of no importance whether I am mistaken or not: but as Mr. B. has shamefully garbled the remark, I cannot pass it over in silence. Having spoken of "the energy, with which the revolution inspired the French in general, who fondly imagined that they were fighting for the establishment of their political liberty," I remarked in note 27, to Ch. XV. that the inhabitants of France had since discovered, that they had been fighting not so much for themselves, as for a new set of despots. I then added: "The enthusiasm herefore of the French armies, *unless the fertility of invention, which is characteristic of the French rulers, furnishes new means of inflaming it, will hardly be equal in future to that, which was displayed at the commencement of the war.*" The summer campaign of 1799, which took place after this note was written,* justified my opinion: for a

* I first wrote my History of the Polish Revolution, which was published at Leipzig, in January 1798.

French army was then disgusted with the Directory, it shewed very little of that enthusiasm, which had been displayed at the commencement of the war. On the other hand, Buonaparte has found new means of inflaming it: and in the last campaign we have seen the consequence. In my proposition therefore, which was merely hypothetical, there was certainly no absurdity. But Mr. Belsham has thought proper to falsify the proposition, in order to render it absurd: for though he has quoted it (p. 195) with inverted commas, and has thus signified to his readers that he has produced the very words of the quoted author, he has suppressed in the middle of the quotation, the whole of the hypothetical clause *unless the fertility of invention*, &c. which I had cautiously inserted, because I well knew how great that fertility of invention really was. Having thus converted an hypothetical proposition to an absolute one, he says with great effect, "To this reflection the victories of the last campaign, and the wide extent of our conquests from the Po to the Danube."

"Dantons, have already affi-
 "five answer." Now, when
 duuced to the necessity of ad-
 artifices, when he is forced
 tions, in order to create a ca-
 his ad-ersary, what opinion
 entertain of the cause, which
 support? And what opinion
 of him, when the
 thus grossly deceived?

It is almost unnecessary to
 trifling remarks, which he
 dismissal of Mr. Chauvelin
 commenced by Dumouriez,
 Mr. Maret to England, at the
 1793, not only because the
 been so fully examined Ch. X
 more remains to be said about
 cause none of the events, which
 during the last fourteen days of
 ration of war, can for the
 assigned, be reckoned among
 However I cannot leave without
 another artful attempt made, by
 to remove the blame of the rup-

French Government. He says p. 116, "Notwithstanding the final rejection of the new letter of credence, and the consequent recall of our Ambassador, by the Executive Council, this government had the merit beyond all calculation of making an effort for peace." Now the effort for which Mr. Belsham here means, was the work of Dauburier; and not the French mission, which was then composed of Laroche, Ponge, Claviere, and Garat, who had then ceased to take part in it. It was so far from having any effect, that three out of the five opposed it with all their power. Although he was too fine a politician to see himself against it, in which capacity as minister for foreign affairs, it had been set on foot, took care that it should produce no effect. All this is very fully related in the Memoirs of Dauburier, who was the mover of the whole. As I correctly reported in Ch. XV, Dauburier had said, Mr. Belsham could not have remained in ignorance about it,

Yet.

Lord Grenville, likewise, in his note to Mr. Chauvelin of the 31st of December,

would only have given rise to complaints of an officious and unwarranted interference, and thus have furnished the National Convention with an additional pretext for colouring the aggression, on which it had already resolved. For Danton said in the Convention, on the 16th of January, 1793, of the intercession attempted by the King of Spain, and which ended, as every man acquainted with the declarations of the French rulers (see Ch. vii. xiv.) expected, "*Quant à l'Espagne, je l'avouerai je suis étonné de l'audace d'une puissance, qui ne craint pas de prétendre à exercer son influence sur votre délibération. Si tout le monde était de mon avis, on voterait à l'instant, pour cela seul, la guerre à l'Espagne.*" *Moniteur*, 21 Janv. 1793. Even the more moderate Vergniaud said, on the 31st of December, "*J'aime trop la gloire de mon pays, pour proposer à la Convention, de se laisser influencer dans une occasion aussi solennelle par la considération de ce que seront ou ne seront pas les puissances étrangères.*" *Moniteur*, 2 Janv. 1793. And Brissot, on the 19th of January, said of England in particular, "*Je m'indignerais sans doute, de voir qu'on épargnât le Roi, pour arrêter la flotte Anglaise.*" *Moniteur*, 24 Janv. 1793. This note may serve, therefore, to justify the conduct of the British Government, not only with the friends of Louis XVI. who might otherwise

Now, when Ministers have condescended to negotiate with a man of this description, (32) and have patiently born with his insulting language, till the negotiation was brought to a crisis, and till it had ceased to be in their power to prevent a rupture, they are so far from deserving censure for *then* dismissing the negotiator, that we should rather commend their moderation, in having

(32) Even without any regard to the personal character of Mr. Chauvelin, it was only the desire of leaving nothing untried, which might prevent a rupture, that could have induced Ministers to commence a negotiation at all with the French rulers, as it was not to be expected, that any Convention, made with so fluctuating an Administration, would produce a lasting effect. Besides, as there was not only a continual struggle between the ruling parties, but each party, when fallen, was branded with the appellation of a faction, the British Government, by negotiating with the rulers of the day, exposed itself to the danger of being accused by the next ruling party of having treated with factionists. To all these inconveniencies the British Government submitted, at the end of the year 1792, when Great Britain was threatened with an attack, in order,

if